



Director of
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INTERNATIONAL: Restrictions on Nuclear-Powered Warships

//Several countries appear to be reviewing their policies concerning port visits by nuclear-powered warships in light of the accident at Three Mile Island. The most serious effect has been to impede progress by the US toward gaining or regaining access for such ships in some countries--particularly France and Egypt.//

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//A senior French naval officer has indicated there is now little chance of a change in the French law governing port visits by nuclear-powered warships. The implementing decree for this law makes no distinction between commercial nuclear-powered ships and public vessels; this would subject US warships to the jurisdiction of French courts in damage suits. Because of this and other unacceptable provisions of the law, no nuclear-powered warship has visited France since 1969.// [REDACTED]

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//Egyptian Government agencies responsible for operating the Suez Canal have expressed an ultraconservative position on transits of nuclear-powered ships or ships carrying nuclear cargoes. Nevertheless, Egyptian officials have reiterated their willingness to honor a US request for transit if it appears to be in Egypt's national interest.// [REDACTED]

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PHILIPPINES: Regional Elections

President Marcos hopes that the provincial assembly elections scheduled for Monday in Muslim-populated areas of the southern Philippines will convince critics of his martial law regime, particularly in the US, that he is serious in trying to end the six-year conflict between Muslim insurgents and government forces.

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Over the past several months, Marcos has been in touch with representatives of a number of Muslim countries who will be attending the Islamic Conference in Morocco next week. He has emphasized his willingness to speak with Philippine Muslim exile leaders in the hope that they can help find a political solution to the rebellion, which has taken some 50,000 lives.

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Marcos may believe that by arranging regional elections at this time, he can preempt any sanctions by the Islamic Conference. He probably also expects his efforts to assist Indonesia in deflecting any criticism of his Muslim policies at the conference.

The elections will have little impact on movement toward a political solution in the southern Philippines. Marcos has made sure that the powers of the assemblies will be severely circumscribed. He realizes that there is no support for significant political decentralization in the country except among Muslims and that the predominant Christian population in the rest of the Philippines is relatively indifferent to the Muslim issue.

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Most Muslims have already concluded that the provincial assemblies will come nowhere near meeting their demands for greater autonomy, and top leaders of the Muslim political front are boycotting the elections.

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LAW OF THE SEA: Progress in Talks

There was moderate progress at the recently recessed eighth session of the UN Law of the Sea Conference, although no breakthroughs were made on the most controversial issues. The meetings in Geneva nearly stalled at times, but a late flurry of activity produced a revised negotiating text. Further revision awaits the outcome of a five-week extension of the session that will begin in New York on 19 July.

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Changes in the seabed mining text will give developed states greater assurance of access to the manganese nodules found beyond the limits of coastal state jurisdiction. These changes strengthen the so-called "parallel" system of exploitation, under which states and multinational corporations would share the right to mine seabed minerals with the Enterprise, the mining arm of the proposed International Seabed Authority.

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The developing countries' caucus--the Group of 77--still insists, however, on obtaining a great number of benefits in return for granting mining privileges to multinational firms. Developing country spokesmen gave no ground in their demands for the transfer of mining and processing technology to the Enterprise and to developing countries, for a production ceiling on seabed mining to protect land-based producers of metals, for developed-state financing of the Enterprise, and for a high level of revenue sharing with mining firms. The group of 77 injected a politically troublesome clause authorizing the Seabed Authority to share the profits of mining with "peoples who have not attained full independence or other self-governing status" such as the Palestine Liberation Organization.

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Little progress was made on determining the limits of coastal states' control over the oil and gas resources of the continental shelf farther than 200 miles from land. Three formulas have been offered. The Arab states want to cut off jurisdiction at 200 miles. States with broad shelves--including the US, Canada, Norway, the UK, Ireland, Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, and India--favor a liberal formula that would grant control over large expanses of shelf beyond 200 miles. The USSR seeks a limit that falls between the other two.

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EGYPT: Islamic Summit Proposal

Egypt's call Thursday for an Islamic summit conference on Jerusalem apparently was made to give the Egyptians a pretext for not attending the Islamic Conference of Arab Foreign Ministers that opens on Tuesday in Morocco. According to Prime Minister Khalil, President Sadat has concluded that the anti-Egyptian forces will be in the majority at the Morocco meeting. To avoid the humiliation of Egypt's being ousted from the conference, Sadat has made its attendance conditional on Moroccan willingness to transform the meeting into a preparatory conference for an Islamic summit. If Morocco sidesteps Egypt's suggestion, which seems likely, Egypt will begin direct contacts with the Islamic heads of state to promote the summit idea. Egypt probably hopes to blunt Arab criticism of the peace treaty with Israel by demonstrating its resolve on the sensitive Jerusalem issue.

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AUSTRIA: National Election

The Socialist Party's chances of retaining its parliamentary majority in the national election tomorrow will depend on a large turnout of voters and a strong Socialist tally in Vienna. The campaign has focused mainly on the personality of the leaders for the two major parties, Chancellor Bruno Kreisky and People's Party chief Josef Taus, rather than on substantive issues. Kreisky hopes to do well in this election to repair the damage done to the Socialists' image by losses in the nuclear referendum and the Vienna municipal election last fall; the Socialists would have done better in both those tests if the Chancellor and other party leaders had worked harder.

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